

SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. SAITOTI TOROME, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND STATISTICS IN THE MINISTRY OF STATE FOR DEVOLUTION AND PLANNING DURING THE AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY CELEBRATIONS 2016 AT KICC, ON 18TH NOVEMBER, 2016

Fellow Principal Secretary (ies),

Prof. Terry Ryan, Board Chairman, KNBS

KNBS Board of Directors,

Mr. Zachary Mwangi, Director General, KNBS,

Representatives from other institutions / organizations,

Representatives from Development Partners,

Members of KNBS Staff,

Distinguished Guests,

All Protocols observed,

It is with great pleasure that I join you this morning as we celebrate the 2016 African Statistics Day. I celebrated this event last year while working at KNBS and this is the month I was appointed as the PS responsible for Planning and Statistics. This tells us that interaction with statistics may prepare you for other assignments. I feel very privileged for having been involved in the production of statistics.

The African statistical community celebrates the African Statistics Day with the objective of raising public awareness about the importance of statistics in the economic and social development of the continent. The decision of celebrating Statistics Day every year was taken since 1990 by the twenty-fifth Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Sixteenth Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development, which Kenya is party to.

Here in Kenya, the history of production of official statistics dates back to the 1920's, when the Government then appointed the first Official Statistician. At the moment the responsibility for data collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics rests primarily with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). The establishment of KNBS as semi-autonomous government agency was purposed to enhance the status and professional independence in production of official statistics. This shows that the Government acknowledges that reliable and timely

statistics as indispensable for informed policy decisions and monitoring implementation of development programmes.

This year's Africa Statistics Day theme is “Strengthening economic statistics for regional integration, structural transformation, and sustainable development”. The choice of this theme underscores the critical importance of economic statistics for monitoring the progress towards regional integration, structural transformation and sustainable development. We all need to track that progress in all its details, so that we can keep up the growth momentum, improve the livelihoods of our people, and avoid any shocks that could throw us off the road to sustained and inclusive growth. As we move forward, we need high quality and timely data for sound economic management, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you may be aware, Kenya has ratified the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a country, we achieved remarkable progress on some of the MDGs while for others we fell short. The SDGs data requirements are considerably higher than those of MDGs and therefore the assessment of progress towards realization of these goals will rely more on existence of an elaborate system of measurement capable of covering more sectors and more indicators. There is an urgent need, therefore, for an increase in the scope of coverage and quality of statistics produced. Consequently, strengthening national statistical capacities and geospatial information systems for the collection, analysis, production and dissemination of disaggregated data needs to be emphasized. I wish to convey my ministry's commitment to support the Bureau in this endeavour.

The SDGs seeks to leave no one behind. They aspire to transform the world in which we live in, and form the new global development framework. The SDGs encompass the inter linkages between the three dimensions of economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability-all currently linked to economic statistics. To achieve the SDGs and the goals of African Union's Agenda 2063, it is imperative to put in place robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress in the realisation of the set goals. Further, countries must strengthen the capacity of their national statistical systems to collect, collate and analyze data.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

High quality economic statistics are critical in the regional integration and economic transformation efforts and are important in the effective implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063-“The Africa We Want”. They play a central role in the design of development programmes, informing policy, monitoring and evaluation. and forecasting future trends. Economic statistics, in particular national accounts, provide comprehensive assessment of performance of a country's economy over time. A strong national statistical system with good infrastructure of collection, processing, compilation, analysis, dissemination and archiving for all economic statistics, is vital to the national economy and development.

Regional integration enhances economic growth and development, as a key strategy for strengthening intra-regional trade, and is expected to produce considerable economic gains for Africa. As you may be aware, Kenya is on the fore front of regional integration efforts. The Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and Political Federation are the key Regional Integration milestones and are critical foundation of the East African Community (EAC). Through the Customs Union, the EAC Partner States have agreed to establish free trade in goods and services amongst themselves. To promote the Customs Union, EAC has entered into a COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite to contribute to the broader objectives of the African Union that is, accelerating economic integration of the continent and achieving sustainable economic development leading to poverty alleviation and improvement in quality of life for the people of Africa. All these initiatives are meant to bring about regional integration that aim at accelerating economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The progress of regional integration must be supported by high quality, timely and comparable economic statistics. The statistics provide data for tracking various aspects of regional integration, including trade, infrastructure and labour mobility, energy, capital investment, productive capacity and monetary and financial integration. As countries continue to pursue development policies and programmes to accelerate regional integration and cooperation arrangements inspired by the Abuja Treaty, which established an African economic Community, Economic Statistics will be an integral component of an integrated, harmonized and streamlined African economic community.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Africa rising is now a reality and its growth is one of the most exciting and important stories in the world today. The sustainable growth and development of Africa call for structural transformation of its economies. Economic statistics are an essential tool for promoting structural transformation, tracking the reallocation of resources from less productive to more productive sectors, boosting the contribution of manufacturing sector to GDP, shifting traditional agricultural employment to the agro-industry sector, advocating a demographic transition from high to low birth and death rates and supporting rise in urbanization.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The KNBS is currently strengthening the production of Economic statistics that are important for measuring macroeconomic indicators. Under the Kenya Statistics programme for Results (KSPforR), the World Bank is supporting KNBS to generate better and more accessible data to inform policy makers and contribute to strengthening the institution's technical as well as management capacity. Through the program, the Bureau has conducted Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Survey 2016, Foreign Investment Survey 2015 and has finalized the data collection phase of the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS 2015/16). Data analysis is ongoing and the basic report is scheduled to be available in the first quarter of 2017. These surveys are aimed at improving the quality of economic statistics.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

While working at the Bureau, I initiated the process of developing a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) which follows a sectoral approach where a Strategic Plan for Statistics is designed for each statistics sector and used as a building block for the overall master plan for statistics for the country. This approach is expected to enhance KNBS's role to coordinate, oversee and set standards for official statistics at both national and county levels and strengthen the National Statistical System. To this end, the Ministry would like to reiterate its commitment to support the Bureau in this venture to ensure harmonization of statistics and strengthening of the National Statistical System (NSS). There is also need to come up with policies that address ever increasing demand for quality statistics, as outlined in the KNBS Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In recognizing the important role played by the KNBS under current reforms, the Government is in the process of reviewing the Statistics Act 2006. The proposed amendments to the Act will cater for standards and methodology in collecting data, supervision of the statistical systems. The same amendments will also designate the rules to be followed in sample surveys, and the linkage of the county data sets to

the national database. With these amendments the mandate of the Bureau under the new Constitution will be clearer and this will allow for comparability of statistics at the county, national, regional and international levels. It will also lead to harmony, and avoidance of duplication, resulting in efficiency in production of statistics and service delivery.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The future of building and compiling African economic statistics is bright and full of hope. We invite you to participate in the celebration of African Statistics Day and champion the strengthening of economic statistics for regional integration, structural economic transformation and sustainable development.

I wish to recognize with appreciation, the continued statistical support we have received from our development partners over the years. I urge the development partners to continue partnering with us in supporting statistical activities in the country to help us meet the growing demand for statistics.

It is now my pleasure to invite you all to this years' Statistics Day Celebrations. Promote and celebrate this event with the statisticians for the strengthening of economic statistics for regional integration, structural economic transformation and sustainable development.

Thank You and God bless you.